

~~Top Secret~~ 215

(Security Classification)

CONTROL NO. SC 00142/77

(b) (1)
(b) (3)

ROUTING			
TO:	NAME AND ADDRESS	DATE	INITIALS
1			
2			
3			
4			
ACTION	DIRECT REPLY	PREPARE REPLY	
APPROVAL	DISPATCH	RECOMMENDATION	
COMMENT	FILE	RETURN	
CONCURRENCE	INFORMATION	SIGNATURE	
REMARKS:			
FROM: NAME, ADDRESS, AND PHONE NO.			DATE

Access to this document will be restricted to
those approved for the following specific activities:

NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE DAILY CABLE

Monday June 20, 1977

CG NIDC 77-142C

APPROVED FOR RELEASE
DATE: MAY 2004

Warning Notice

Sensitive Intelligence Sources and Methods Involved

NATIONAL SECURITY INFORMATION

Unauthorized Disclosure Subject to Criminal Sanctions

~~Top Secret~~

(Security Classification)
E2 IMPDET

~~TOP SECRET~~

SOUTH KOREA: Nuclear Issue

Page 7

~~TOP SECRET~~

~~TOP SECRET~~

SOUTH KOREA: Nuclear Issue

[redacted] Public discussion of security matters in South Korea is focusing increasingly on the issue of nuclear weapons. [redacted]

[redacted] the possibility of South Korea developing an independent nuclear weapons capability is being linked directly to the withdrawal of a US nuclear presence. This concern reflects in part Seoul's desire for what it requires as an assured deterrent against North Korea. The South Koreans also view the nuclear weapons option as a lever that can be used against the US.

~~TOP SECRET~~

~~TOP SECRET~~

[] South Korean press coverage of the nuclear arms issue increased following the visit to Seoul in late May of a high-level US delegation to discuss the troop withdrawal. Initially, press play focused on foreign reports speculating on the retention of the US nuclear umbrella:

--President Carter's interview in a US weekly magazine in late May, which was widely hailed as an indication that this protection would continue.

--A June 7 Japanese press report on the nuclear capability of B-52 flights.

--A US newspaper story on June 12 referring to the nuclear capability of US air units in Korea.

[] More recently, however, Seoul newspapers played up a report to the US Congress that tactical nuclear weapons will be removed from Korea when US troops are withdrawn.

[] The possibility of South Korea developing a nuclear weapons capability of its own--long a taboo subject for public discussion--has received increasing attention. The press believes that it would be unrealistic to discourage discussion of nuclear armament, citing foreign studies on nuclear proliferation as proof that more countries are likely to develop a nuclear weapons capability in the 1980s and that South Korea should not be left behind.

[] The South Koreans are making the point that they may have to embark on a nuclear weapons program if the US umbrella is withdrawn. In part this reflects Seoul's doubts about the reliability of the US defense commitment and its desire to develop an "absolute" deterrent against North Korean aggression.

[] South Koreans generally recognize the problems nuclear development would pose for Korea, both in terms of regional stability and relations with the US. Even so, the issue is a highly emotional one in South Korea and there is a tendency to view a domestic program as a logical development if the US nuclear shield is withdrawn.

~~TOP SECRET~~

~~TOP SECRET~~

[redacted] while there is no direct evidence the Pak government has deliberately inspired the discussion of the nuclear weapons question, the authorities probably are tolerating it. The government may think that any effort to squelch the dialogue would create greater anxiety. There are some in the government who view the nuclear arms option as a lever that can be used against the US. [redacted]

~~TOP SECRET~~